

First International Symposium on Development of Public Administration in South-East Europe

The *First International Symposium on Development of Public Administration in South-East Europe* took place at the Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana on 14th – 15th June 2007. More than one hundred participants from 17 countries attended the symposium, mostly from South-East Europe (Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Estonia, Romania, FYR of Macedonia, Albania, etc.), as well as from other countries – the United States of America, France, Germany, Great Britain and Belgium.

The Faculty of Administration at the University of Ljubljana organized the symposium to celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is one of the most important institutions providing undergraduate and graduate study programmes, as well as research and development, counselling, and additional trainings in the field of public administration for public administration employees, and conducting international co-operation within Slovenia and abroad since 1957. Main activities of the Faculty of Administration comprise of development of the different fields, mostly regulation of public administration, public entities, economics of the public sector, public finance, management and implementation of IT in the public sector, as well as development of e-administration. In accordance with current developments in European higher education system, the Faculty of Administration is one of the first faculties to start Bologna study programmes in 2005/2006 academic year, as these programmes are acknowledged among experts to meet the challenges of technological changes and globalization trends.

The basic purpose of the scientific symposium was (again) *to re-establish connections and networking, as well as scientific cooperation in the field of the development of public administration* in the countries of South-East Europe. Speakers and participants of the symposium were mostly university

professors from scientific institutions, researchers, experts from practice and individuals engaged in different fields of public administration development. Besides the Faculty of Administration at the University of Ljubljana, other foreign universities and organizations were helping with the preparation of the programme, organization and realization of the symposium. This refers mostly to universities and organizations already cooperating with the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana in the past, such as the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade, the NISPAcee (The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe) and the ReSPA (Regional School of Public Administration).

The main reason for this event was a common position of all organizers concerning the fact that the development of administrative systems in the countries of South-East Europe was specific mostly due to the circumstances and conditions of social development in these countries in the last decades. Until the 1990s, communism defined special relations between the state and its administration, as well as specific operating principles, absence of democracy and democratic principles, lack of openness, responsibility, etc. Thus, certain administrative systems that differed much from the ones in the western countries were developed. During the period of transition, the development of administrative systems and administrative science was interfered with political and economic reforms and tragic war in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Because of these circumstances, most administrative systems in these countries were immature and unqualified for providing services to modern societies and countries that wanted to join the EU. Since co-operation of the countries from South-East Europe was almost completely interrupted in the past decade, the Faculty of Administration decided to attempt to renew scientific and professional co-operation, exchange of experience and good practice between institutions operating in this field. We all wish the symposium to become a *traditional annual meeting of administrative profession and science*, since the nations in these countries are closely connected through their history, culture and ethnicity. The next symposium in 2008 is expected to be held in Belgrade.

The introductory part of the symposium as well as its conclusion were held in *plenary sessions*, while the middle part consisted of four sessions with different topics organized in two sections due to many prepared and selected articles. The symposium was held in English. In the introductory part of the symposium, the founder of the symposium and the president of the Programme and Organizational Committee, *Prof. Mirko Vintar, PhD*, Dean of the Faculty of Administration, *Prof. Srećko Devjak, PhD*,

Slovenian Minister of Public Administration, *Prof. Gregor Virant, PhD*, and an acknowledged expert in administrative systems, *Prof. Dragoljub Kavan, PhD*, from Serbia held their speeches. In the plenary sessions, participants had the opportunity to listen to *Juraj Nemec* from the University of Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, *Prof. Gorazd Trpin, PhD*, from the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, and *Sofia Papantoniadou* from the European Commission.

Assist. Prof. Stane Vlaj, PhD, from the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana and *Prof. Slobodan Dujić, PhD*, from Faculty for State and European Studies in Podgorica held the session on the first topic *System aspects of development of public administration within South-East Europe*. The holder of activities in organizing this section was *Prof. Tone Jerovšek, PhD*, from the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana. In two sections 12 speakers from Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, FYR of Macedonia, Germany and Slovenia held their speeches. Discussion was related to the content and timeframe of public administration reforms in some countries and the activities of public administration with regard to the influence of politics on the profession. It also referred to the situation and development of local self-government; monitoring the processes of introduction of new legislation; the system of public administration employees; better regulation; etc. There was also a lot of interest in comparison between the content of reforms and procedures for passing reform regulations in different countries with similar basic (or as it was the case in the former Yugoslavian countries – even the same) legislation.

Prof. Stanka Setnikar-Cankar, PhD, from the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana and *Prof. Neda Vitezić, PhD* from the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka held the session on the second topic *Financial aspects of public administration within South-East Europe*. Seven speeches that were held in this section, discussed the public-private partnership in EU countries; the development of tax procedures in Slovenia; elimination of administrative barriers to enhance competitiveness of companies; the influence of decentralization on the public spending and influence of the public sector on the expansion of public services. Participants concluded that the topics discussed, especially public-private partnership, were topical social issues with interdisciplinary, mostly economic and legal consequences.

The third topic *Modernization of the public administration, quality of the public administration, E-administration* was held by *Assist. Prof. Zdravko Pečar, PhD*, from the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana and *Prof. Munib Tahirović, PhD*, from the Faculty of Public Administration in Sarajevo. In two sections, we heard to eleven presentations. At the presentations, the

following topics were discussed: the use of excellence models EFQM and CAF (European Common Assessment Framework for organizations in the public sector); quality system in public administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the use of e-services in Serbia; participation of citizens at local level in South-East European countries; the development of models for measuring quality in public bodies; local administration and e-democracy; the use of e-state services; HRM in public administration in the period of transition; etc. It is very important to enhance the operations of public administration as a whole, since only a well-balanced development brings optimal benefits for all parties.

The fourth topic, *Education and training for performance of public administration*, was held as a plenary session on the second day of the symposium, so all the participants could attend. The discussion was held by acknowledged experts in this field, namely *Prof. Srećko Devjak*, PhD (dean of the Faculty of Administration in Ljubljana), *Nicolas Dubois* (ReSPA) and *Prof. Mirjana Drakulić*, PhD (vice-dean at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences in Belgrade). Eleven presentations discussed educational programmes for public administration employees; co-operation between the USA and Croatia in the field of education and trainings for public administration in Croatia; needs for education of public administration employees and their influence on the HRM; as well as programmes of administration according to the Bologna declaration and the case of Slovenia, which implemented these programmes in previous years. The speakers presented their experience from Estonia, the United States of America, Croatia, Albania, Serbia and Slovenia. The participants established that even though some programmes already exist, there are still plenty of opportunities for further co-operation between educational institutions and competent ministries in different countries of South-East Europe, both in undergraduate and postgraduate studies as well as in short-term training programmes for public administration employees.

Along with plenary sessions and different topics that were discussed, there was also a working session at the symposium discussing the main topic and a special professional discussion, as well as the session of the Management Committee with attendants from participating institutions. On the first day of the symposium, the deputy mayor of Ljubljana, *Aleš Čerin*, hosted a reception and addressed the participants. He introduced the capital city of Slovenia, the activities of municipal administration, and successful co-operation between the town hall and the Faculty of Administration in the past. The mayor of the city of Ljubljana, *Zoran Jankovič*, also attended and welcomed the participants.

A very successful symposium met with a wide response and contributed significantly towards renewal and development of scientific cooperation in the field of administrative science in South-East Europe, and contributed to searching for efficient models of managing the countries of South-East Europe while considering the particularities of development on this territory. To keep the records on conclusions and for their further development, the Faculty of Administration of the University of Ljubljana issued a *CD with summaries of all speeches* of the symposium in June 2007. Best speeches will also be prepared and published in the form of *scientific monograph* before the end of 2007. Some authors will also publish their articles in the scientific journal *Uprava (Administration)*, issued by the Faculty of Administration.

Please refer for more information with regard to the 1st International Symposium on Development of Public Administration in South-East Europe on the web site <http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/SSPA2007/default.asp>.

Barbara Grošelj i Polonca Kovač***

* Barbara Grošelj, junior scientific and research assistant at the Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (samostalna stručna suradnica za znanstveno-istraživačku djelatnost Fakulteta za upravo Sveučilišta u Ljubljani)

** Polonca Kovač, PhD, higher lecturer for Administrative Law at the Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (viši predavač za upravno-pravno područje Fakulteta za upravo Sveučilišta u Ljubljani)